

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 07685 171753Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAB-01 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OPR-02

IO-10 SAM-01 ACDA-05 OMB-01 SAJ-01 (ISO) W

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R 171628Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4841

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMXASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7685

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, PINT, LE, SY, EG

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 07685 171753Z

SUBJECT: SYRIAN (AND EGYPTIAN) INITIATIVE RAISE FLAGGING HOPES RE

CABINET FORMATION

REF: (A) BEIRUT 7507; (B) BEIRUT 6966 (NOTAL)

1. RETURN JUNE 16 TO LEBANON OF SYRIAN VICE PREMIER AND FONMIN KHADDAM (FBIS JN161826Y) HAS HAD EFFECT ON MANY LOCAL OBSERVERS OF RESUSCITATING SAGGING EXPECTATIONS THAT COUNTRY'S CONTINUING CABINET CRISIS WILL BE RESOLVED IN NEAR FUTURE. COMMENTATORS, WHO YESTERDAY EXPRESSED GROWING UNEASE AT PREMIER-DESIGNATE KARAME'S ABILITY TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES FACING HIM IN NEAR TERM, NOW SEE POSSIBILITY THAT NEW GOVT. WILL BE ANNOUNCED AS EARLY AS JUNE 18. KHADDAM, WHO MET LAST EVENING WITH PRES FRANGIE AND KARAME, PLANS CONSULT CHRISTIAN LEADERS PIERRE GEMAYEL AND CAMILLE CHAMOUN TODAY AND NUMBER OF LEBANESE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS, INCLUDING KAMAL JUMBLATT (FBIS JN161612Y), HAVE OR WILL SOON BE UNDERTAKING TREK TO DAMASCUS.

2. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT, EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON, MUTWALLI, RETURNED EVENING JUNE 16 FROM CONSULTATIONS IN CAIRO, CARRYING MESSAGES FROM PRES SADAT FOR PRES FRANGIE, PLO EXCOMM CHAIRMAN YASIR 'ARAFAT, KAMAL JUMBLATT AND POSSIBLY OTHERS. MUTWALLI'S RETURN COINCIDES WITH PUBLICATION JUNE 16 OF LENGTHY INTERVIEW (SEPTTEL) WHICH PRES SADAT RECENTLY GAVE TO GHASSAN TUENI AND MICHEL ABU JAWDEH OF INFLUENTIAL BEIRUT DAILY, "AN NAHAR." REGARDING SITUATION IN LEBANON, SADAT IS QUOTED AS ASSERTING THAT CRISIS MUST BE SOLVED AT ALL COSTS. SUGGESTED THAT RECENT EVENTS HERE HAVE BEEN ORCHESTRATED BY THE SOVIET UNION AND LIBYA AS AN ELEMENT IN "WARFARE" AGAINST HIM, SADAT SAID THAT HE CONSEQUENTLY REGARDS THE CRISIS IN LEBANON AS HIS OWN STRUGGLE.

3. COMMENT: WE REGARD KHADDAM'S RENEWAL OF HIS EFFORTS TO RESOLVE LEBANESE CABINET CRISIS AS PREDICTABLE OUTCOME (PARA 6, REFTTEL B) OF GROWNING SYRIAN IMPATIENCE WITH INABILITY OF LEBANESE POLITICIANS TO SORT THEMSELVES OUT. GENERAL IMPRESSION OF WELL-INFORMED OBSERVERS HERE IS THAT BOTH DAMASCUS AND CAIRO INCREASINGLY CONCERNED
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 07685 171753Z

THAT, IN ABSENCE OF DEMONSTRABLE PROGRESS IN FORMING NEW CABINET, SECURITY SITUATION WILL ONCE AGAIN DETERIORATE WITH INCALCULABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR LEBANON AND AREA AS A WHOLE. WE HAVE HEARD (AND TEND TO AGREE) THAT SYRIA AND EGYPT BOTH OPPOSE ISOLATION OF PHALANGISTS BECAUSE SUCH DEVELOPMENT WOULD SERVE EXTEND AND INTENSIFY INSTABILITY HERE.

4. REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER SYRIAN AND, TO LESSER EX-

TENT, EGYPTIAN INITIATIVES WILL BE EFFECTIVE IN BREAKING APPARENT LOG-JAM WHICH HAS BEEN AFFLICTING LEBANESE POLITICAL PROCESS. WE BELIEVE MUCH OF OPTIMISM THAT KHADDAM WILL HAVE NEW LEBANESE CABINET ON TRACKS WITHIN 48 HOURS IS BASED ON WIDESPREAD REALIZATION THAT HE MUST DEPART SOON FOR TALKS IN WASHINGTON RATHER THAN ON INSIDE INFORMATION. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS PROBABLE THAT KHADDAM'S TIGHT SCHEDULE WILL ACT AS GOAD TO HIS EFFORTS AND WE SUSPECT THAT SARG AUTHORITIES WILL BE PRESSING JUMBLATT IN DAMASCUS TO PERMIT SOME FACE-SAVING SOLUTION TO HIS FEUD WITH THE PHALANGE. WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY INSIGHTS WHICH EMBASSIES DAMASCUS AND CAIRO COULD SHARE ON HOST GOVT. POSITIONS. GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, CABINET, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT07685
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750211-0187
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750640/aaaabkae.tel
Line Count: 128
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BEIRUT 7507, 75 BEIRUT 6966
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <28 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN (AND EGYPTIAN) INITIATIVE RAISE FLAGGING HOPES RE CABINET FORMATION
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, PINT, LE, SY, EG
To: STATE CIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006